

St. Thomas cadets set electrifying record



The Saint Thomas Academy's Experimental Vehicle Team built this sleek electric car (above) that is breaking world records. It laps a competitor (left) from an outside line.



By Lisa Dinzeo
Saint Thomas Academy

The Saint Thomas Academy Experimental Vehicle Team set a new Electric Cart Association world record last May at the two-day Electric Car Event for high school students. The Cadets team traveled a record-setting 37.52 miles at the Berlin Speedway in Marne, Mich. The previous record was 37.00 miles, held by Lakeshore High School, also from Michigan.

"We are very pleased with the results," said teacher and Experimental Vehicle Team moderator Mark Westlake. "Students have put in hundreds of hours of effort and time into this vehicle. It is the culmination of many late night evenings and Sunday afternoons."

Only two years ago, the Saint Thomas Academy Experimental Vehicle Team, formerly known as the Supermileage Team, claimed the National High School record with 1,322 miles per gallon, and later won the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) College Supermileage

Challenge. The Experimental Vehicle Team is led by senior Cadet Ryan Dobie who was also a part of the record-setting 2000 Supermileage Team.

The Electric Car Event, which hosted more than two dozen high school teams from throughout the country, has students design, build, test, and race small one-person cars that run for a total of one hour on 64-pounds of lead-acid batteries. In addition to the mechanics and physics of the vehicle, students must also factor in and strategize about available energy from the batteries, efficiency of the car, current weather conditions and skillful race tactics. The driver, with the constant help of his pit crew, must make minute by minute decisions to keep the vehicle at its optimal performance over the hour-long event.

"I love it when things don't work and we have to fix them," said Westlake. "As a team, the students have uncovered thousands of things that don't work; however, they have also then

creatively discovered a number of successful solutions."

The small electric car weighs 170 pounds and can transport one student. The car is built from chromoly steel and has a carbon fiber/Kevlar body. The vehicle is solely powered from a lead-acid battery and travels approximately 50 miles per hour.

The car was painted in the patriotic stars and stripes in honor of the men and women of the armed forces and was given the lucky number 13 for the original United States flag.

The Experimental Vehicle Team is a co-curricular activity led by Saint Thomas Academy physics teacher Mark Westlake and senior leader Ryan Dobie. Other students include seniors Andrew Lee, Eric Carolan, Andrew Bowen, Ben Hanrahan, and Jordan Beissel, juniors Ray Schleck, Peter Gac, and Paul

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

You don't need to be a network-news "junkie" these days to be aware that our Army is immensely busy. As this edition of the *Goldbar Leader* is published, we see daily news accounts of continuing combat operations in Afghanistan, major deployments of CONUS and European-based Army units and large numbers of Army National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve individual and unit mobilizations.

As cadets and cadre who wear the Army uniform in hundreds of communities across 4th Region, you are one face of this very busy Army that the average American citizen can easily see and touch. In your daily encounters with our curious and sometimes anxious fellow citizens, remember what you represent. Wear your uniform proudly. Don't speculate about activities and events in which you are not a direct participant. Graciously and humbly accept the



Col. Daniel S. Challis

thanks and praise of most who very much value your contributions to our nation. Calmly, politely avoid angry confrontation or debate with those citizens who may publicly or privately express anti-war or anti-military feelings. They have every right to peaceably express themselves, and you strengthen our Army's image when you maturely stay out of the fray. Do not be baited or provoked into inappropriate words or behavior.

Be proud of who you are and what you represent. Your positive presence on our university campuses and in our high schools speaks volumes about the values and commitment of our Army in these challenging times!

Ruck up & Move out!

NCO NOTES

As we enter a new year, I'd like to take a few moments to remind you cadre members and cadets about the value of mentorship. I received an e-mail message recently from a very new platoon leader who had written back to his university cadre about his initial experience in signing for his platoon. The lieutenant's ROTC training and the values exhibited by his instructors prepared him very well for his first experience as an Army leader.

He explained about the \$15 million sub-hand receipt that had to be inventoried and signed within 30 days. He described the Air Load Planners Course he was attending during the day, getting off just in time to pack up and head to the field to help man the night shift during an exercise his unit is conducting.

"I laid out my equipment just like you said, Sir," said the lieutenant.



Command Sgt. Maj. Lewis Ferguson

ant to his PMS. "I had the hand receipts right there and signed it down. It was not easy or fast, but I did it right and that is what is the most important. I was able to squeeze it all in and now I am having a blast, I am really busy, 15-hour days lately, but we are ready to go keep the warfighters communicating."

He recently found out his unit will probably deploy soon. This story should make it clear how important are the values the cadre can pass on to cadets. If you're a cadet now, be careful not to be overcome by the events you now face. Take a good look at this officer's actions and attitude and take heed to the finite window you have to hone leadership skills – his opportunities might soon be yours.

Commander encourages AFTB training

By Maj. Woody Stone

"It's not a social club, and it's not a support agency," said 4th Region AFTB Program Manager Tammy Lee. "AFTB is an educational program that empowers family members, civilian employees and active duty personnel to be independent and to understand the Army systems available to them."

Army Family Team Building is a program designed during 1994 to help Army leaders and their families in acquiring life and leadership skills. Col. Daniel S. Challis, the 4th Region Commander, fully supports the program and desires to have every MS-IV cadet exposed to Level I AFTB training prior to commissioning. He also encourages



AFTB course graduates at the 2002 Commander's Conference in Reno, Nev.

schools to provide the instruction for Levels I, II and III of AFTB so cadets take ownership of the program before they get to their units. The most

efficient way to accomplish this, according to Lee, is to have certified instructors at the schools, serving as the subject matter experts on AFTB.

Every year cadre members from 4th Region schools, as well as their spouses, civilian employees and contracted employees, have the opportunity to take this intensive three-day course at the Region Commander's Senior Conference, held annually in Reno, Nev. Graduates complete a specific curriculum allowing them to become certified instructors who can then teach Levels I, II and III at their own schools. Seventy-six of 78 schools in the region have certified instructors.

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UC Davis is top school in Army ROTC



These Forged Gold Battalion cadets have sets their sights high and both battalion schools, University of California, Davis and California State University, Sacramento, hit the mark with the 2002 annual MacArthur Award.

By 2nd Lt. Christopher Columbres University of California, Davis

The Forged Gold Battalion (FGB) Army ROTC program at the University of California, Davis (UCD) and California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) was recently honored as the most outstanding battalion in the nation, edging out hundreds of other ROTC programs throughout the country.

The MacArthur Foundation annually recognizes the top ROTC program nationwide with the gold MacArthur ROTC Leadership Award, named after the famed Gen. Douglas MacArthur. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Donald Hill, was presented the award while attending the Professors of Military Science Conference held in Reno, Nev., on Nov. 5. The best program is determined by the performance of their cadets at the National Advanced Leadership Camp (NALC), held at Fort Lewis over the summer, and on the number of cadets that go on to com-

mission as second lieutenants. More than half of the FGB cadets attending NALC this summer graduated in the top third of their class and an additional 26 cadets were commissioned as second lieutenants - double the established goal for the battalion.

The Forged Gold program has steadily grown in the last few years, currently training over 100 cadets at UCD while the number of cadets at CSUS doubled in the past year alone. One reason for such phenomenal growth at the CSUS detachment was aggressive politicking by the cadre to increase support from the university. Among the 2002 cadre at CSUS, Capt. Todd Kramer and Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Powell were successful in obtaining office space that gave the detachment a "home" on campus, something CSUS never had before.


The new instructor at CSUS, Maj. Brian Anderson, envisions bigger and better things for the CSUS detachment. "We will eventually be-

come our own battalion in five or 10 years. Our school is on track for growth."

The award comes as no surprise to FGB cadets, but rather as a sign that all their hard work and dedication to training has paid off. The cadet battalion executive officer, Bert Uyenco, says that the MS-IV class has been doing an outstanding job teaching the MS-IIIs, emphasizing skills essential to success at NALC. He also said the MS-III class likewise has been, "Flexible, open minded, and willing to learn a huge amount of information in a short amount of time."

Cadet Christopher Harrington agrees, but adds that the cadre has been just as important to the training of the cadets. "I feel that the battalion benefits from the experience of the cadre, and it filters down the chain of command, from the cadre to the MS-IVs down to the Is and IIs. The work that they put into our training plan really helps us out. The MS-IVs and cadre have a lot to teach us and we enjoy learning it."

A lot of credit for the award must also be given to the MS-I and II class, as they represent the future of the ROTC program. The intensity of their training has increased over previous years to further develop the abilities of the lower division cadets in preparation for their MS-III year and, ultimately, for NALC.

After winning the award this year, FGB cadets and cadre intend to work even harder to win the award again. "With all of the great programs around the country," said Uyenco, "what we did last year won't be enough for this year. We will try, though." 



The battalion overcame a variety of obstacles to win the national honors.


AFTB, cont. from Page 2

tors - many have more than one. In fact, 136 certified instructors are currently assigned to schools, brigades and the region headquarters within 4th Region. But with the Army reality of reassignment, it's healthy to regularly review the future need for more qualified instructors at each unit.

As an AFTB Core Instructor, Lee teaches AFTB classes with a passion and excitement that few can muster. This is the seventh year

the course has been available prior to the annual conference. During her most recent class in November, Lee and five other instructors taught a group of 43 students from ROTC programs throughout 4th Region.

Besides being the Region AFTB Program Manager, Lee is also a Department of the Army civilian who works in the 4th Region headquarters Command Group. Her fellow instructors included Susan Challis, who is the wife of the region commander and a Core Instructor. The

military representatives on the instructional team were Sgt. Maj. Paul Massullo, the 2nd Brigade sergeant major, and Sgt. Lester James, Administrative noncommissioned officer for the 4th Region command sergeant major. Other AFTB Core Instructors included Jodi Land, who is currently the Fort Lewis Fisher House Business Manager, and Melanie Knapp-Cook, who is the AFTB Accreditation Manager for the Presidio of Monterey, Calif. 

Central Washington hosts, wins Ranger Challenge

By 2nd Lt. Fawn Czebotar
Central Washington University

Central Washington University (CWU) ROTC honored their ROTC alumni while bringing home the gold for the third year in a row when they hosted the annual Ranger Challenge competition at their Ellensburg, Wash., campus on Oct. 25 to 27. Capt. Christopher Schmitt, a Special Forces officer newly assigned to CWU ROTC, added a fresh perspective when he asked to honor a fellow Special Forces officer, Capt. Randy Schliep, for heroic actions in a 1999 combat search and rescue mission.

Specifically designed to recognize the dedication and bravery of Army Special Forces Capt. Randy Schliep, this event honored the heroic actions of his entire rescue team. On two separate missions, they rescued two U.S. Air Force pilots shot down by Yugoslavian military forces inside of Serbia during the war in Kosovo.

Schliep, a 1992 CWU graduate, led this team in March of 1999 when he answered a “Mayday” call from an F-117 Stealth bomber. Learning that the pilot had ejected somewhere within Serbia, Schliep’s team worked hard to coordinate possible link-up sites and were eventually able to fly in and recover the pilot. One month later, the team received another “Mayday” call from another downed pilot. This time, remembering the Americans’ procedures the month before, the enemy launched sporadic ground fire and surface to air missiles, but nevertheless, the team was able to return safely home with the pilot.

Schliep also received the Alumni Association’s 2002 Special Achievement Award, presented annually to a CWU graduate who has




Arriving with CWU’s winning team, Cadet Lawrence Barber carries the game ball home. demonstrated outstanding achievement in his or her professional field.

“Honoring Randy was a great opportunity to honor a friend who was involved in a real-life situation and who went to Central,” Schmitt said. “I wanted to show that graduates from Central’s ROTC program are involved in activities like this downed-pilot scenario. If you are a solid leader and desire a challenge, why not give it a try?”

Participating in the Ranger Challenge competition this year was Pacific Lutheran University, Seattle University, Eastern Washington University and Central Washington University. Hosting the competition for the second year, CWU started off the first day of Ranger Challenge with the Army Physical Fitness Test at 6 a.m. Seattle University’s male team scored the highest in this event, followed closely by the Central Washington University male team. After a quick recess for breakfast, they moved immediately to the ten

kilometer forced road march which finished in the CWU football stadium. Competitors ran five kilometers to a “rescue site” where they picked up a wounded “pilot” - a weighted duffel bag - and then ran the remaining distance carrying the victim on a litter (poleless stretcher).

The Ranger Challenge Teams moved immediately to compete in the Grenade throw, Weapons Assembly, and the Rope Bridge. The four schools rotated through these events, with help from the cadets from Central Washington University as team guides. Seattle University’s male team earned the streamer for the Grenade throw event, while the Eastern Washington University male team took home the streamers for the Weapons Assembly and the Rope Bridge events.

For the final day of the competition, the teams loaded up and moved out to the land navigation site. This event was conducted in the scenic hills of Reecer Creek and finished at the majestic Lions Rock, a local landmark. Once again, Eastern Washington University finished first, earning their third streamer in the competition. To finish off the day, ten cadets from the four competing schools were chosen to go on a twenty-minute ride in a Black Hawk helicopter. The flight went through the scenic canyons of Central Washington, landing just in time to see the close of events and Central Washington University ROTC win the trophy cup for the third year in a row. The winning team from the pilot rescue event had the honor of delivering the game ball to the CWU homecoming game. Rightly so, it was the CWU male team who had the honor, coming in first in this event, followed closely by Seattle University’s male team and then by CWU’s coed team. 

Crumby crowned King of UTEP



King/Cadet Dan Crumby and the UTEP Homecoming Queen, Zoya Wier.

By Maj. Corey Roen
University of Texas-El Paso


Daniel Crumby was a military policeman stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas from 1999 to 2000. After serving four years on active duty, he ap-

plied for and received an Army Green-to-Gold scholarship. Currently he is a Political Science major at the University of Texas-El Paso. While in his senior year, Crumby represented the ROTC Miner Gold Association in the university homecoming pageant. The homecoming pageant involved more than 48 university students. The competition for Homecoming King was intense, demanding, and time consuming. The judges for the 2002 competition included UTEP alumni. The pageant included the following events: dance routine from respective designated era, casual wear, and formal attire, in which he displayed his Army dress green uniform with all his entitled ribbons and awards.

While showcasing his formal attire, Crumby was asked, “Do you consider yourself as a leader or a follower?” With a calm demeanor, he replied with the following, “I consider myself a leader as reflected by my admittance in the University of Texas-School of Law and my willingness and desire to be a member of the United

States Supreme Court.” His answer quickly gained support from the audience.

During the final round of competition, the judges selected three final contestants for homecoming king, The first of which was Crumby. The finalists were asked one final question so that the judges could make their final decisions. After the final decisions were tallied, Crumby was announced as the 2002 University of Texas-El Paso Homecoming King. As king, he is entrusted with representing the university in public matters on the UTEP campus and in the El Paso community. This distinct honor is a great accomplishment for the ROTC program and serves as a future inspiration for Green-to-Gold applicants. Crumby will commission as a second lieutenant this year.

The Green-to-Gold Scholarship is awarded to qualified Army enlisted soldiers who express a desire to earn a commission as an Army officer by leaving active duty to complete their undergraduate degree. 

Calpoly cadet takes first in France

By Cadet Crystal Murray
California Polytechnic
State University

Not many Army ROTC cadets have competed in an international competition, let alone win a gold medal. This past summer, however, Cadet Chrissy Gritzke of 3rd Brigade's California Polytechnic State University journeyed to France and brought home a Pentathlon gold medal as a souvenir of her efforts.

Her journey began at Fort Sam Houston, Texas in June where, after three weeks of intense tryouts, Gritzke was selected to fill one of six positions on the United States Armed Forces Military Pentathlon team. For 2002, the international military competition was held at the French Army Artillery School at Draguignan, France.

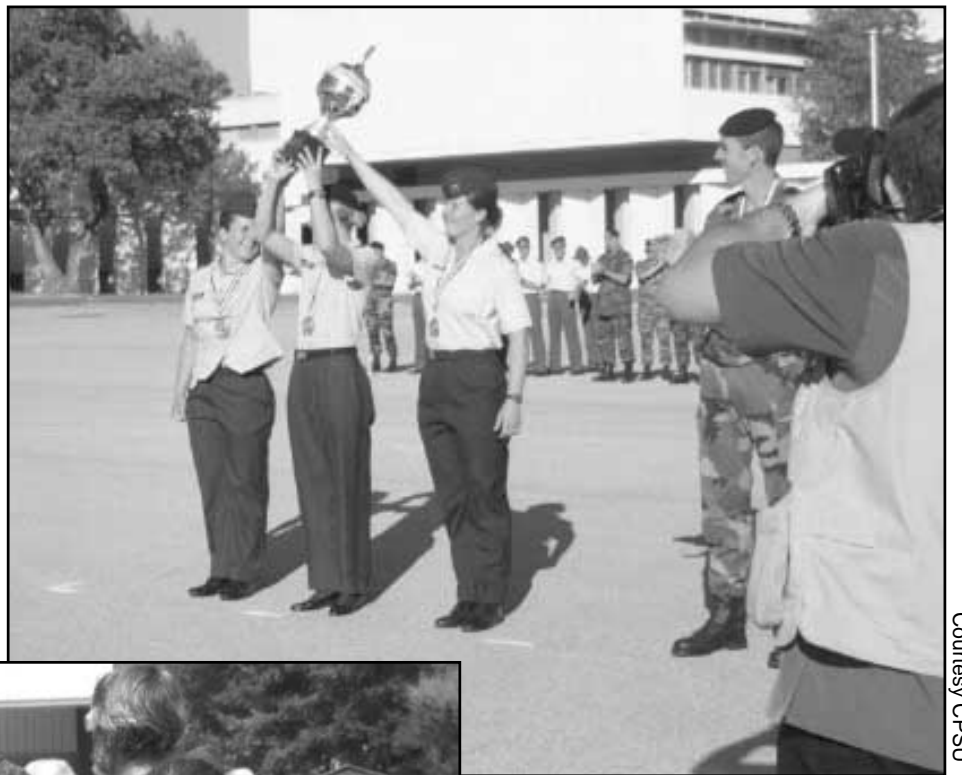
"It was a lot of fun," Gritzke said, "a real learning experience and I am going to attempt to compete again in the future." This year the competition will be held in the Netherlands.

The first three weeks of tryouts were done individually. "The instructors closely watched all the candidates to see how you performed," Gritzke said, "and to find the right people for the team. They wanted to find people who would bring their unique physical abilities to the team and represent the United States well."

The fourth and final week in Texas, the men and women's competition teams trained together to build cohesion and to further develop their individual skills and abilities. Gritzke, Army 1st Lt. Jessica Beecham, and Air Force Capt. Maiya

Kraus made the final cut for the women's team.

The Military Pentathlon competition consists of five events, similar to the Ranger Challenge competition: a land obstacle course, a swimming obstacle course, orienteering, rifle marksmanship at 200 meters and pistol marksmanship at 25 meters. The weapons used were those of the host nation - this year the French FAMAS 5.56 mm rifle and the Mark 50 9 mm pistol. The land obstacle course was, for Gritzke - who is a three-year Ranger Challenge veteran and 3rd Brigade cham-



Courtesy CPSU



Courtesy CPSU

Left to right in both photos, Cadet Chrissy Gritzke, 1st Lt. Jessica Beecham, and Air Force Capt. Maiya Kraus were the U.S. Women's Pentathlon team.

pion in 2000, her favorite event. It consisted of a 500-meter track interspersed with twenty exhausting and challenging obstacles. The 50-meter swimming course had five obstacles that were, in actuality, not a significant challenge for Gritzke, also a three-year member of Cal Poly State University's women's water-polo team.

"Competing teams from NATO countries negotiated all the courses in BDUs, which enhanced the difficulty level," Gritzke said. The orienteering course kept all the competitors on their toes with constant map changes and difficult terrain. For marksmanship, the competitors had to expertly apply the fundamentals using relatively unfamiliar weapons.

"This competition helped me to learn a lot that I can share with other cadets and also in my future units," said Gritzke, who intends to branch with the Army Engineers. "Most cadets don't have an opportunity to participate in a competition like this. It was a great learning experience that I hope more cadets would have the opportunity to partake in the future." Gritzke's most emotional and memorable moment was at the closing ceremony. "When my U.S. Team was announced and my name was called out over the sound system to come up and receive the Gold Medal, shivers went up my spine," she said. "I was so proud to be an American and to be privileged enough to represent my country."

More information on the International Military Pentathlon competition can be found at the web site <http://www.militarypentathlon.com>.



Aggies once again dominate Ranger Challenge

By Capt. Keith Machen
Texas A&M University

Texas A&M dominated the field of 34 teams at the recent Ranger Challenge competition held at Fort Hood, Texas, Oct. 18-20, capturing its second consecutive championship. The Fightin' Texas Aggies sponsored two teams in the competition, with Team One taking the title and Team Two placing third in the overall competition. Team One took first place in four of the seven events, the 10K road march, weapons proficiency, patrolling and the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). Both teams out-paced the rest of the field

in the APFT, with Team One posting an incredible 384 average and Team Two not far behind with a 368 average.

The charge to the winner's circle began in the afternoon of Oct. 18 with the start of the APFT. From there, Team One never looked back, leaving the rest to compete for second place.

"We were determined to repeat last years performance," said Master Sgt. Victor Hoyos, the Aggies' coach and military advisor. Cadets Keith Alaniz and Ray McPadden tied for top individual honors on the APFT by scoring a phenomenal 402. The Road March event proved to be another strong

suit for the Aggies, out-pacing their nearest competitor by several minutes. Texas A&M has won the Ranger Challenge competition eight out of the last eleven years, placing 1st and 2nd many of those years. The Aggies who made it happen were: Team One, Ray McPadden (Team Captain), Keith Alaniz, Daniel Trevino, Daniel Laakso, John Huckabay and Riley Redus. Team Two was Brennan and Grant Speakes, Chuck Oliveira, Michael Arevalo, Andrew Hightower and Trevor Smith. Rounding out the Aggie contingent were alternates, Cadets Christopher Stearns and John Morris.



Kansas forum spotlights female officers

By 2nd Lt. Shannon A. Twohig
University of Kansas

The University of Kansas Army ROTC program hosted a seminar and luncheon on Nov. 21 to inform cadets and students considering ROTC of the changing roles of women officers in the Army. Eight female officers were invited and shared their insights and experiences with current female members at KU Army ROTC and prospective cadets. During the afternoon session, the entire Army ROTC program was held a discussion of women in the Army, led by the key note speaker, Col. Colleen McGuire, Commandant of the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. Other speakers included Col. Melanie Reeder, Maj. Joan Perry, Maj. Kristin Woolley, Maj. Lisa Cranford, Capt. Cynthia Evelyn, Capt. Jana Torok and Capt. Susan Mitchell. All are assigned to units at Fort Leavenworth.

The luncheon was held in the early afternoon. Just the female cadets were invited to this portion to allow them to speak one-on-one with the female officers. The goal was not only to encourage open and free discussion of issues facing female officers, but also to establish links to successful female officers who could potentially mentor these Army ROTC cadets as they begin to make career decisions. The female cadets said they enjoyed the opportunity. “The

opportunity to speak with female officers taught us both personal and professional lessons that we can use in our future careers,” said Cadet Tamara Gonzales. Other cadets said they had never been in the same room with so many successful women. KU Army ROTC also received positive feedback from the officers supporting the session, highlighting how this wasn’t just a chance for them to speak with future leaders, but also provided an opportunity to bond with other officers stationed at Fort Leavenworth.

It was pleasantly surprising how much talking was going on, not only between the cadets and officers, but also between the officers themselves. A lot of bonds were made during the lunch, which was the reason for the lunch and therefore made it a success.


Following lunch, McGuire briefed the entire battalion about changes in the military over the years and the unique challenges facing a female officers. The ensuing discussions between the cadets and the panel of officers were lively and informative. Many cadets were surprised to learn the varying and demanding roles and jobs held by the panel, like Cranford’s current position as a tactics instructor at Command and General Staff College. The idea of a woman teaching tactics at the Army’s premier operational warfighting institution surprised many cadets and helped them understand the changing and expanding roles women officers



2nd Lt. Shannon A. Twohig

A panel of female officers presented itself to cadets at the University of Kansas to discuss the roles of women Army officers.

play in today’s Army. Lt. Col. Brian M. DeToy, Professor of Military Science at the University of Kansas, was pleased with the event and says he will continue to develop it in the future.

“All of our cadets benefited tremendously today through this interaction with these outstanding officers and role models,” said DeToy. KU Army ROTC continues to look for ways to better inform and link today’s cadet with the Army. Based on the success of this seminar and interest shown not only by cadets, but also by the visiting officers, the cadre hope to expand this program in the spring semester. 


“World Record” cont. from Page 1

Evans, sophomores Luke Wallrich, and Nick Snyder, and freshman Nick DePrey.

The Saint Thomas Academy Experimental Vehicle Team then traveled to Cedar Rapids, Iowa to participate in the Toyota Midwest Speed Championship. They continued to impress the electric car world with convincing wins in both the “Open Class” and the “Standard Class” races, defeating 38 high school and college team competitors.

“The students have always worked well together when they were building and testing the car,” said Westlake. “It’s that group teamwork and hard work that has made this a winning vehicle and a winning team.”

The “Open Class” race includes a pit stop in which teams must switch drivers halfway into the race. Even with the driver switch, the Saint Thomas Academy car set a new track record of 38.15 miles in one hour at Hawkeye Downs Speedway, lapping the second place team four times. The cadets also claimed the “Standard Class” race, posting a winning time of 38.50 miles in one hour. The top high schools from Michigan, Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota fielded the largest “Electrathon” race on record, with more than 38 cars lining up on the starting grid.

After rewriting the Supermileage record books in 1999 and 2000 with two SAE National Supermileage Championships and a National High School record, and recently setting the Electric Cart Association’s World Record in 2002, the Saint Thomas Academy students are preparing for their next challenge. The Cadets are currently conducting a feasibility study on a solar or solar/human hybrid vehicle for 2003. 

2nd Louie By Bob Rosenburgh



Cadet Ron Opperman is a 'Toughman' to beat

By Cadet Ricky Opperman
University of Central Oklahoma

If ever a cadet could be labeled a Renaissance Man, then Cadet Ronald W. Opperman is that man. As a MS-III cadet at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Okla., Opperman has packed more living and experiences in his first 30 years than most do in a lifetime. Opperman has done everything from working offshore in the bayous of Louisiana, to graduating from Rodeo Clown School, to serving as a United States Army Reserve drill sergeant. And now, as a cadet in Army ROTC, he is working toward a commission. Standing almost 6 feet, 7 inches tall, Opperman has yet to back down from a challenge.

He grew up in Morgan City, La. His first desire was to become a professional basketball player, but he also realized the importance of an education. He wanted to complete his education at Mid-Del Christian High School but his mother could not afford to send him there, so Opperman began working offshore, as a deck hand on a supply boat that provided equipment and manpower to oil rigs. His determination earned him the money to attend and graduate from Mid-Del Christian High School in Del City, Okla.

In 1992, Opperman was recruited to play at Southwestern Christian University where he competed for three seasons. He held the honor of having earned the highest career points until 2000 and still holds the title of leading rebounder for a single season. In 1995, Opperman began working to assist in paying for college but the lure of a good paycheck took him away from his education until




Cadet Ron Opperman takes a break in the field.

the fall of 2002. Although no longer competing in collegiate basketball, his quest for a physical challenge led him to competing in "Toughman" competitions in 1997. "Toughman" is an amateur, non-professional boxing competition. As tall as he is, but only weighing 170 pounds, he was an unlikely competitor in a sport dominated by body builders, bouncers and bar fighters. All of his fans were thoroughly surprised when Opperman began to win. But he could pack a wallop. Throughout his "Toughman" career, he fought in 19 fights winning 15 and only losing 4. In 1997 and 2000, he made it to the "Toughman" finals. In 1999, he competed in the Golden Glove finals in Kansas/Oklahoma earning second place in the middle-weight division.

In November of 1997, Opperman enlisted in the United States Army Reserve as a Combat Medic. In 1999, his search for adventure led him to Rodeo Clown School in Carthage, Texas. A 79-inch tall man combined with a barrel and a bull

is an uncomfortable combination. Opperman learned a barrel is a place to avoid - it feels like being hit by a Mack Truck whenever the bull rams into its side. The films of his rodeo clown days show how quick and agile he is. Opperman notes that the threat of being gored by a bull will put some pep in your step.

After Rodeo Clown School, he decided to return to Oklahoma where he still had his good-paying job with Federal Express. Never shying away from a challenge, he accepted an offer to go to the Drill Sergeant Academy. Opperman attended and graduated from the 95th Division Drill Sergeant School at Fort Sill, Okla., in 2001. Being a drill sergeant candidate was an enlightening experience. He realized that he had a unique opportunity to lead soldiers in the United States Army. He originally left school to make money but he realized that happiness was not about making a lot of money. Opperman has been looking for challenges for the past seven years. He found a new challenge, the challenge of leading soldiers as an Officer in the United States Army. He cut his hours at Federal Express and came to finish his education at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. In January of 2002 at the age of 30, Ron swore to become an officer at the end of his schooling.

Opperman currently serves as the Sergeant Major of the Broncho Battalion and attended Air Assault School during Christmas break. He recently married, and looks forward to commissioning in July of 2003 and a pursuing an exciting and challenging career as an Army officer. 

UNR Supply Operation selected to compete at DA level

By Maj. Danny Dulay
4th Region (ROTC) Logistics Officer

The Supply Operation of University of Nevada, Reno has earned the honor to compete at the Department of the Army level of the Supply Excellence Award (SEA) competition in its first year of entry. The UNR supply operation will compete in the category of Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) battalion with property book, category level I (B). The SEA is an annual Armywide competition designed to recognize outstanding units for exemplary supply standards and accomplishments and includes units stationed worldwide.

Ms. Lori Harris leads the UNR supply operation, serving 81 cadets enrolled in the ROTC program and their cadre with centralized logistics support, including all administrative requirements for supply room and S-4 operations, budget requirements, and inventory control.

She manages a property book that provides all authorized classes of supply support to the battalion headquarters and to one subordinate/partnership program, Community College of Southern Nevada/University of Nevada, Las Vegas, located 450 miles south of Reno. Due to the geographical separation of sites,

a considerable logistics effort is required to distribute materiel on a timely basis.

During their most recent Command Inspection, the UNR supply section received a Commendable rating by exceeding all measurable standards in every area. Harris' innovative thinking and technical proficiency earned her selection as the U.S. Army Cadet Command Supply Technician of the Year for 2002.


Preparation for the SEA involves commitment and lots of hard work, but the success of the competition also requires command support at all levels. In order to compete, the nomination packet must go through all levels of command - 3rd Brigade Headquarters, 4th Region (ROTC), U.S. Army Cadet Command and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

The TRADOC Supply Excellence evaluation board selected UNR as a finalist and submitted the packet to the U.S. Army Quartermaster School at Fort Lee, Va., as a Department of the Army nominee in its category. A DA inspection team will travel to Reno and conduct an on-site evaluation of the UNR supply operation. Between January and June, the SEA team will evaluate all units competing at DA level, includ-

ing National Guard and Reserve Component.

The hard work, dedication and accomplishments of Harris are evident in the outstanding success of her supply room.

"To be considered the best unit in its category and to represent Cadet Command and TRADOC as a finalist at the DA level is a true accomplishment," said Col. Daniel Challis, 4th Region Commander. "This honor is granted to the unit exemplifying the highest standards in meeting regulatory requirements and maintaining supply discipline. Selections at these levels indicate the excellent state of UNR's logistical operations during the year leading up to competing for the prestigious award."

The annual SEAs are sponsored by the American Defense Preparedness Association in conjunction with HQDA, for units representing major commands in the Active Army, US Army Reserve (USAR), and the Army National Guard (ARNG). The DA level winners will receive their awards from senior Army leadership at the Pentagon. Winning at the DA level can only be possible through considerable effort and command emphasis. Competing at the highest level of the competition in its first attempt is testament to the unit's hard work and dedication. 

Colony cadets visit bomber crash site

By Cadet Mystie Flippo
Colony High School

The Colony High School JROTC Recondo team began a five mile-hike June 12, up to Bomber Glacier in Alaska’s Talkeetna mountains. They were climbing to the place where a B-29 Superfortress bomber, lost in a storm, crashed onto the glacier in 1957. The nine cadets, Pat Wallace, Mystie Flippo, Josh Wright, Robert Barnez, Brianna Akens, John Watson, Chris Suarez, Ian Laughlin and Cody Milner were accompanied by retired Lt. Col. Edward Strabel, the Senior Army Instructor. They started hiking from Archangel Road and traveled to Upper Reed Lake, where the team established their base camp.

Next day, they hiked to the glacier, climbing through a high mountain pass and hiking across the glacier. When the cadets finally arrived, they examined the crashed plane like a FAA investigating team. They determined the direction of travel and altitude of the plane at the time it crashed.

“It’s unfortunate,” Wallace said, “If they had



The Colony High School JROTC Recondo Team approaches the crash site on Bomber Glacier.

been a thousand feet higher, this accident would have never taken place.” However, if they had been 500 feet higher, they would have hit a rock cliff and no one would have survived.

“It’s amazing that any people survived,” said Akens, as she climbed around the wreckage.

Earlier, some of the cadets researched the crash and discovered the fate of the crew. They all gathered around at the crash site as the story was told about the 10 men that had been flying the air-



Cadet John Watson stands before one of the plane’s giant radial engines.

craft. Four of them were lucky and survived. The heroic story of Staff Sgt. Calvin Campbell was recalled. He helped his injured friends survive until a rescue helicopter could reach them the next day. The trip was a learning experience for the cadets.

They returned to their campsite later in the afternoon where they relaxed prior to beginning their descent and returning to civilization the next day.

Yakima team shoots impromptu match

By Retired Lt. Col. Jeff Duncan
SAI, West Valley School District

On Nov. 10 five members of the West Valley High School JROTC (Ram Battalion) shooting team traveled from Yakima, Wash., to the Capital City Junior Rifle Club just outside of Olympia. The cadets came to compete in the Washington State Indoor International Rifle Championship match. While most of the contestants were from Western Washington, many shooters came from Oregon. The competition involved some of the best in air rifle of the two states. Cadets Chris Wolfe, Alex Gonzales, Freddy Gonzales, Colton Haas and Rocky Tkacz competed in this kind of competition for the first time. Gonzales is team Captain. When asked why did they do it Alex replied, “We have never experienced this type of competition before,” Gonzalez said. “We shoot in regular competition with other cadets. We wanted to find out what it was like to shoot at a state competition with the precision shooters.” Since the JROTC matches use the USAS rules, it was very easy to make the transition to this meet. The cadets knew the rules, what was expected of each shooter on the line and what type of equipment each shooter could have.

“We did not come to this meet with any expectation of success,” Gonzales said. “We knew we could not compete with the precision shooters. We do not have the equipment to

put us at their level. I mean, we shoot Daisy air rifles and they shoot Anschutz and Walthers. We shoot in sweatshirts and they shoot in shooting jackets, shoes and pants. We shoot and place our gear on a chair, they use shooting stands and shooting scopes. We can’t compete. But it was a lot of fun just being there to watch them.”

However, when West Valley JROTC informed the match organizer, John Crossman, they were coming, he graciously added a sporter class to the meet. “This gave us a chance to be successful,” said Tkacz. “We were not classified with the state competitors and that helped us out.” The cadets are used to shooting a quarter course, which is ten rounds in each of the three positions, prone, kneeling and standing (off hand). During this match the cadets had to shoot 60 rounds - all in off hand. “That was real tough,” said Wolf. “We were not used to firing that many rounds in that position. It sort of reinforced to us how important the equipment is for firing off hand.”

By the end of the day the Ram Battalion team was glad they went to the match. Gonzales was the top shooter in the sporter class with a score of 357/600. “Given our equipment and the fact that we are early in our own season, that was a good score,” he said. “I was surprised I did that well.” The team is already planning another road trip this spring to catch a similar match in Wenatchee, Wash.

Wichita JROTC Cadet honored as hero

Story courtesy of
Wichita Public Schools

Cadet Clint Brooks, who is a senior at Northwest High School in Wichita, Kan., recently received the JROTC Medal of Heroism for actions performed last July on Interstate-235 near the city. As Brooks was driving to a nearby town, he noticed a car which had swerved off the road and collided with a light pole. He quickly pulled over and notified police using his cell phone. Remembering the basics from this JROTC First Aid classes, he was initially reluctant to move the unconscious victim. However, by the time the first police officer arrived on the scene, the car had begun to burn.

Brooks then helped the officer pry open the door. It was apparent the driver’s legs were tangled in the pedals and one of his arms was pinned between the seat and dashboard. Weighing the consequences, Clint said that he remembers saying to the officer that the driver “would be better off with a couple of broken bones than staying in the burning car.” Brooks took hold of the victim and wrenched him out. The driver’s pants were already afire; so Clint dragged him away from

the vehicle, then helped extinguish the fire. He subsequently helped calm the victim and assisted the police and paramedics with controlling a crowd that gathering around the scene of the accident.

Award of the JROTC Medal of Heroism Award requires presentation by a General Officer, so Maj. General James Haught, the former Commander of the 89th RSC in Wichita, performed the duty. Both Haught and Cadet Brooks, who serves as the Cadet Command Sergeant Major for USD 259 (Wichita), were guests at the school district’s annual Superintendent’s JROTC appreciation breakfast. This event, which is planned and organized by the DAI, retired Col. Robert Hester, served as a fitting and appropriate venue for the award, since it made all the high school principals and district officials aware of Brooks’ heroic deed.

As for Brooks, he plans to join the Army and become a member of the 82nd Airborne Division upon graduation from high school in June. In the meantime, he is a little embarrassed by all the attention, but looking forward to a great tour of duty as a paratrooper.